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## The Northeast Oregon Hatchery Project

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### Introduction

The Northeast Oregon Hatchery (NEOH) project was initially developed in 1987 to mitigate for losses to the salmon population and was re-initiated in 1998 to focus on improvement of the ongoing Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP) program and on conservation and restoration. The original LSRCP production program was 490,000 spring chinook salmon smolts (native stock) to the Imnaha River and 900,000 spring chinook salmon smolts (non-native stock) to the Grande Ronde River, which were expected to result in the return of 3,210 adults to the Imnaha River and 5,820 adults to the Grande Ronde River.

### Participants

This project is a joint effort of the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT), the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and BPA.

### Production Goals

Subsequent to the listing of Imnaha and Grande Ronde spring chinook salmon, the goals of the project were altered to serve mitigation and conservation goals. The shift to a conservation focus resulted in the current production goals and all native stocks:

- 490,000 Imnaha River stock spring chinook salmon smolts (conventional broodstock)
- 250,000 Lostine River stock spring chinook salmon smolts (captive and conventional broodstock)
- 250,000 Catherine Creek stock spring chinook salmon smolts (captive and conventional broodstock)

- 250,000 Upper Grande Ronde River stock spring chinook salmon smolts (captive and conventional broodstock)
- 150,000 Lookingglass Creek stock spring chinook salmon smolts (conventional broodstock)

Although the revised program does not include additional production, the change from two stocks to essentially eight stocks resulted in increased space, water, and segregation demands at Lookingglass Hatchery (the existing LSRCP facility producing Imnaha and Grande Ronde spring chinook), which caused an overload and subsequent failing of the facility. Current production levels are at about 30 percent of the program goal and fish are shipped several hundred miles to other facilities (Irrigon and Bonneville hatcheries) to complete rearing.

### Proposed Facilities

A recent NEOH proposal (Step 2) identified the need for additional facilities and modifications to existing facilities to effectively implement the agreed upon program. These new and modified facilities would better rearing conditions through lower rearing densities, improved pathogen free water availability, and better segregation. In addition, they would make it possible to meet the production goal authorized for the LSRCP program.

The NEOH Step 2 submittal proposes construction of the following:

- A new hatchery facility located on the Lostine River for the purpose of rearing all or part of the Imnaha stock production as well as the Lostine stock production;
- A new adult collection facility for the Lostine stock;
- Modifications to the existing Lookingglass Hatchery; and



- An expansion of the existing Imnaha Satellite adult collection and juvenile acclimation facility.

To date, \$7,392,533 has been spent on this project. Construction costs for the proposed program, included in the Step 2 proposal, are \$16,348,637. Final design costs, including land acquisition and easements, are \$2,816,813 for a total of \$19,165,450. Beginning in 2008, annual operating & maintenance costs are estimated at \$676,154, and monitoring & evaluation costs are estimated at \$2,413,449 annually.

### **ESA Targeted Stocks**

All spring chinook salmon produced in the Grande Ronde and Imnaha programs are listed under the Endangered Species Act as part of the Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon ESU. Based on the Interim Abundance Targets from NOAA Fisheries, the Grande Ronde and Imnaha make up 11 percent of the Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon ESU—the remainder of populations are in the Salmon River (84 percent), Tucannon River (2.5 percent), small lower mainstem Snake tributaries (2.5 percent).

### **Harvest**

Hatchery origin Imnaha and Grande Ronde spring Chinook salmon may be harvested in the ocean (<2 percent) or mainstem Columbia treaty and recreational fisheries (5–7 percent). Recreational harvest was closed in 1979 in the Imnaha and 1973 in

the Grande Ronde River. A limited tribal harvest has occurred in these subbasins in the last 30 years. As part of the management plan for these populations the co-managers have developed a harvest plan for in-basin tribal and recreational fisheries. These fisheries are managed on a case-by-case basis with authorization by NOAA Fisheries and only occur once threshold escapement levels have been met. In 2001, sufficient adult returns (approximately 6,356) provided for the first recreational fishery in 22 years on the Imnaha. Sport and tribal fisheries harvested approximately 635. Co-managers are currently working on developing a harvest management plan for the Grande Ronde River with hopes that the first fishery in 32 years might be opened in 2005.

### **Timeline for Project**

The Council approved proceeding to the final design phase of the project in October 2004. A request for bid will be sent out mid-November (60–90 days). Assembly of final design package should begin April 2005 with an October 2005 completion date. The Council would possibly approve the final design package and authorize construction in October 2005. Construction would begin in spring 2006.

### **Contact Information**

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